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QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

[*Order made by the President of the Madras Legislative Council under Standing Order No.* 15 *on the 4th December* 1924.]

1. Starred questions to be put at a meeting of the Council with their answers shall be printed and placed on the Council table an hour before the President takes his seat.

The President will call out the name of each interpellator in the order in which the names are printed, specify the serial number of his question and make a sufficient pause to give him or any other member a reasonable opportunity of rising in his place and putting a supplementary question. Supplementary questions must be put immediately after the principal questions to which they relate.

2. If a member responsible for a starred question happens to be absent when it is called, it will be open either to him or to any other member to put supplemental questions thereon after the other starred questions for the day have been answered, provided question-time is not thereby exceeded.

3. Questions, not starred, will not be called in Council, but they will be printed with their answers and placed on the table of the House along with the list of starred questions. Oral supplementary questions will not be allowed in regard to unstarred questions.]

STARRED QUESTIONS

Electricity

Enhancement of the rate of electric supply in Madras City.

* 218 *Q*—Mr. BASHEER AHMED SAYEED: Will the hon. the Law Member be pleased to state—

(*a*) whether there exists any agreement between the Government and the Electric Supply Corporation, Madras, regarding the supply of electric current to the City of Madras and whether the same will be placed on the table;

(*b*) whether the rate at which current is supplied at present is higher than the rate at which it was supplied before the Great War and, if so, what led to the enhancement of the rate; and

(*c*) whether the Government propose to take steps to get the rates reduced in view of changed circumstances prevailing in the market?

A.—(*a*) For the supply of electric energy in Madras, three licences were granted under the provisions of the Indian Electricity Act—

(*a*) The Madras Electric Licence, 1905;
(*b*) The Madras (Port) Electric Licence, 1909; and
(*c*) The Madras (Cantonment) Electric Licence, 1910.

All these were published in the *Fort St. George Gazette*; the first was published at pages 664 to 666, Part I of the *Fort St. George Gazette*, dated the 29th August 1905. There seems therefore no need to place it on the Council table.

(*b*) The maximum rates authorized in the original licence were—

(*a*) for lighting purposes—8 annas per unit; and
(*b*) for power purposes—4 annas per unit.

In June 1919 the Government approved the introduction of a flat rate of five annas per unit for electric energy supplied on a combined circuit for the use of lights and fans. The licence

was accordingly amended and the amendment published in the gazette. It was provided that the flat rate should be charged only for a period of three years from the date on which the amendment came into force. This limit of time was subsequently removed mainly on account of the increase in the cost of working the undertaking and of the necessity for a large amount of additional capital for various improvements to the plant to meet the increasing demand and to put the undertaking on a satisfactory basis.

(c) No.

Mr. Basheer Ahmed Sayeed :—" Sir, now that the cost of the undertaking and the necessity for a large amount of additional capital as has been given in answer to clause (b) of the question, is much reduced, may I know whether the Government will consider the advisability of reducing the flat rate by one anna at least ? "

The hon. Sir C. P. Ramaswami Ayyar :—" Mr. President, Sir, it will be noticed it was by an order dated 1921, that Government came to the conclusion that inasmuch as the cost of working such undertakings are systematically increasing owing to the rise of prices of machinery and materials and to the rise in wages of labour, the increase of rate is justified. If hon. Members of this House and the Corporation will put their heads together and point out that the rates can be lowered Government will be glad to consider such suggestions."

Mr. C. V. Venkataramana Ayyangar :—" Does not the final order shut up any such possibility ? The limit of time is removed for some reasons. Is the door still open to change the rates ? "

The hon. Sir C. P. Ramaswami Ayyar :—" The Government have definitely said in the order of 1921 that they reserve to themselves the power, when the conditions alter, to revise the rates."

Irrigation

Improvement of drainage in Godavari western delta.

* 219 *Q.*—Mr. D. Narayana Raju : Will the hon. the Law Member be pleased to state—

(a) whether any proposals have been submitted to Government for the improvement of drainage in the Godavari western delta ; and

(b) if so, what action the Government intend to take on them ?

A.—(a) No specific proposals for drainage in the western delta have been received, but the Chief Engineer has applied for extra staff for the purpose of remodelling the channels and improving the drainage of the delta as a whole.

(b) This is now under the consideration of the Government.

Mr. D. Narayana Raju :—" Sir, in answer given to a question on 24th March 1925, the Government were pleased to give a list of drainage works which were on the programme for approval. May I know what became of these drainage works, and why there were no specific proposals now made ? "